



REVITA

The Acquisition Workforce

LTG John S. Caldwell Jr.

A key Acquisition Support Center (ASC) initiative is revitalizing the acquisition workforce. To address this workforce-related issue, ASC is developing and implementing an organization Communication and Outreach Plan (COMPLAN). This far-reaching effort extends beyond the acquisition community, clearly articulating the Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Workforce's (AL&TWF) critical role in supporting the warfighter.

The COMPLAN is aligned with the U.S. Army Acquisition Workforce Campaign Plan (Campaign Plan) and its three strategic objectives — strengthening the link with the warfighter, providing a clearly defined environment that encourages and offers career development at all levels and aligning the acquisition workforce with Army transformation.

ALIZING



The COMPLAN identifies key target markets and outlines specific messages for each market. A variety of media are used to ensure that appropriate messages are clearly articulated to each specified target market. These media include the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASAALT) Web site; ASC Web site, briefings, conferences and tradeshow; ASC Newsletter; *Army AL&T* [Acquisition, Logistics and Technology] magazine and other military, operational career field, government and commercial sector publications and newsletters. The COMPLAN also includes a comprehensive branding strategy using the aforementioned media to establish ASC and the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) as the Army's principle acquisition resource.

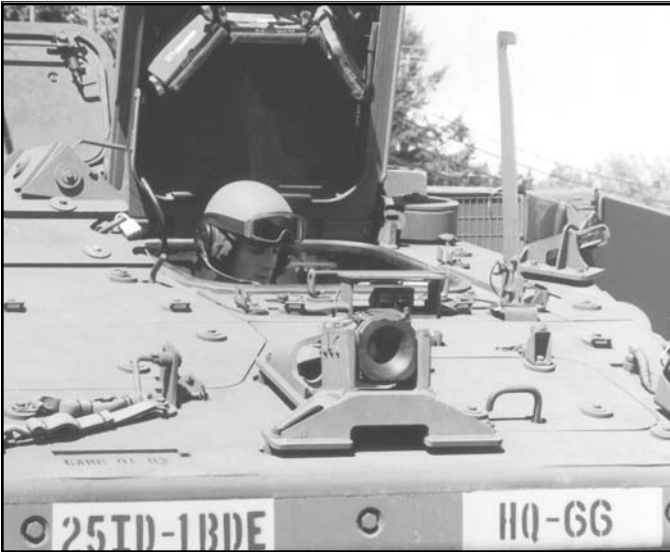
The Campaign Plan is a dynamic initiative launched to ensure that the acquisition workforce is properly sized and trained, and equipped with the right tools at the right time to support the Army's transformation now and in the future. As the Army changes to meet the emerging and dynamic threat of terrorism and urban warfare, our workforce must adapt accordingly. We are also at a critical time when we expect to face a talent drain, with as

many as 50 percent of our workforce expected to be eligible to retire over the next 5 years. We must turn these challenges into opportunities that strengthen our link with the warfighter.

Because both plans are dynamic documents, they will be updated and revised to reflect the latest status of each initiative as often as necessary. The ultimate goal for both plans is to convey that the acquisition community directly supports the warfighter and is working tirelessly behind the scenes to provide state-of-the-art equipment, weapons and systems that are more lethal, survivable and sustainable on the battlefield, regardless of the mission or threat.

Campaign Plan

We have all heard the time-tested maxims "communication is a two-way street" and "actions speak louder than words." Our **first** strategic objective — to strengthen the relationship between the acquisition workforce and the warfighter — requires two-way communication between the warfighter and acquisition workforce professionals who do the research, development, testing, evaluation, contracting, logistics, fielding and sustainment



Strengthening our link with the warfighter means providing him with the equipment and weapon systems he needs when he needs them. Here a Stryker Brigade Combat Team soldier gets ready to put the 19-ton Stryker interim armored vehicle through its paces during a demonstration at Fort Lewis, WA.

of all warfighting systems. It is vital that we personally interface with warfighters to ensure that their requirements are successfully being met quickly and cost-effectively. To facilitate this information exchange, ASC, an ASAALT field operating agency, will increase public, Army and warfighter awareness of the AL&TWF's mission, role and relevance and how we acquire the systems and equipment that support the warfighter's critical wartime and peacetime missions, as well as their day-to-day security activities around the globe.

ASC has updated its Web site and *Army AL&T* magazine and will continue to brand the AAC within the Army. I have encouraged program managers (PMs) and other acquisition community professionals to meet on a more regular basis with their operational users — battalion and brigade commanders. This collaboration will provide PMs a better appreciation of the challenges warfighters face when identifying systems' requirements and articulating those requirements into meaningful dialog or specifications that can be acted upon by the acquisition community.

Many AL&TWF civilians are not fully aware of the warfighter's role in contingency operations. To further this appreciation, a hands-on "operational" experience program for civilians is being established to facilitate better understanding of how the systems they develop are integrated into actual tactics, techniques and procedures. During Phase I, ASC is exploring the development of an "Army 101" course, or in conjunction with

existing Army courses, providing an opportunity for hands-on participation by acquisition workforce civilians. My office and ASC are committed to promoting the AAC and its systems at high-level conferences, including the Acquisition Senior Leaders' Conference held Aug. 12-14, 2003, in Seattle, WA, and the annual Association of the United States Army (AUSA) convention to be held Oct. 6-8, 2003, in Washington, DC.

I encourage all AL&TWF members to visit this year's AUSA Conference. Many program offices and contract providers will attend this prestigious event, proudly displaying their equipment, services and talents that are so critical to wartime success and peacetime maintenance. The annual AAC Ball will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Crystal City (Arlington), VA, on Sunday, Oct. 5, 2003. This year's theme is "*To the Soldier*" and is a special tribute to the Army warfighter. At the AAC Ball, we will also announce the winners of the Acquisition Commander, Product Manager and Program Manager of the Year awards for 2003. Please honor our soldiers by attending this important event.

Our *second* strategic objective is to ensure that we provide a clearly defined environment that encourages and offers career opportunities and leader development at all levels. ASC continues to aggressively identify, refine and offer educational, training and experiential opportunities for the entire acquisition workforce. ASC is responsible for providing the programs that develop our workforce to perform in their current positions and prepare them for future positions of increasing responsibility and leadership. These programs include the Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program, opportunities in the Acquisition Education, Training and Experience (AETE) catalog, the Competitive Development Group (CDG) Program, Senior Service College (SSC), Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), the Acquisition Career Experience Program (RDAP) and mandatory Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) functional courses offered by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU). DAWIA requires that acquisition personnel obtain appropriate certification (which includes DAU training) for their position within 18 months of assignment to an acquisition position. Acquisition workforce readiness through essential education, training, certification and job experiences ultimately ensures the viability, credibility and authentication of our workforce in

procuring, developing, designing, testing and fielding the necessary equipment, weapons and communication systems for our soldiers in the field.

There are several important initiatives underway to assist in this important training effort. The Intermediate Learning Education (ILE) course will replace the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in FY05. The Army is transforming the way it trains leaders and the AAC must follow suit. We are taking a close look at how we can best grow our future acquisition leaders. The Army Acquisition Basic Course (AABC), taken upon accession into the AAC and prior to ILE, has moved to Huntsville, AL, and replaces the Materiel Acquisition Management course. AABC will provide equivalencies for ACQ 101, ACQ 201, CON 101, CON 104, LOG 101, IRM 101 and TST 101, providing a solid cross-functional base for newly assigned acquisition officers to take with them to their first assignments. AABC is also intended to train civilian AAC interns. The course is exportable to the field and will reduce costs while also increasing its frequency and accessibility for potential students.

However, AABC *is not* a leadership course. AABC provides functional training only to prepare AAC candidates to perform entry-level acquisition duties. The

Army is developing ILE core curriculum and complementary intermediate acquisition leadership training for the middle years in the acquisition career life cycle where assessed officers and post-intern civilian leaders are expected to assume duties that include leading teams, sections, divisions and directorates to provide the Army's materiel and service solutions. At this stage, leader development is essential in developing confident, competent leaders that are continual learners, modernizers and motivators that are focused on constant improvement and innovation and can produce timely, cost-effective solutions. The Army needs lieutenant colonels, colonels and their civilian equivalents that can visualize, steer, motivate, build and act independently on intent with a minimum amount of guidance from the field. Ultimately, we are designing a core curriculum that consists of education, training and leadership opportunities that will enable us to groom acquisition professionals that directly support warfighters and their operational commanders on the battlefield.

Additionally, efforts are underway to obtain a separate military occupational specialty (MOS) for noncommissioned officers (NCOs) performing acquisition work. The intent is to establish career growth potential from staff sergeant to sergeant major. Career tracks for acquisition officers are constantly being reviewed to ensure they reflect current trends and talents. The same must be done for selected NCO MOS if we are to strike an appropriate balance between the operational Army and the Army acquisition community.



Dan Bernard (right), Pathfinder ACTD contractor, discusses Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Systems (UAVS) innovations with Bunny Greenhouse, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Contracting Director. LTC Andrew Ramsey (back), UAVS Project Manager, discusses the program with another field demonstration attendee.

Last year, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Claude M. Bolton Jr., Army Acquisition Executive, commissioned an independent task force (TF) to address challenges facing the Army's civilian program manager (PM) community.

This TF focused primarily on the civilian PM selection process, related assignment activities and post-PM utilization opportunities as it identified a proposed solution implementation plan. The TF identified more than 25 initiatives covering such areas as leadership, PM career model development, post-utilization assignments, personnel policy and procedures, training, the environment, incentives and selection boards. The TF's goal was to investigate ways in which to motivate more civilians to apply for PM positions; how to best use PMs following their tours; and determining the most appropriate assignments for participants completing other high-level activities such as SSC, NPS, CDG Program and acquisition-specific long-term training (LTT) events. The TF also identified several misperceptions about these programs that might possibly deter the best applicants from applying. The TF proposed viable solutions to address these perceptions, and metrics have been identified that will track any changes in the number of civilian selectees, the quality of post-utilization assignments and follow-on survey results. I am pleased to report that many of these initiatives have already been implemented. (Please see the related article on Page 8.)

In place since 1997, the CDG Program is a premier ASC initiative designed to provide civilian acquisition workforce leadership development opportunities. Began in 1997, it provides professional development opportunities to a select group of GS-13s (and broadband/payband equivalent levels) that are board-selected annually. The CDG Program will eventually include a "PM

Track" with the necessary program executive office (PEO)/PM assignments and training to develop critical leadership competencies for future civilian PMs. The CDG Program also integrates required HQDA staff assignments, LTTs and other high-profile assignments such as Future Force and Future Combat Systems (FCS) to support Army transformation endeavors.

Our *third* and final strategic objective is to align the acquisition workforce with the Army transformation. To ensure synergy, our institutional base — including schools, training, services, organizational structures and business practices — must change to support the Future

Force and FCS mission requirements. At the same time, DAWIA directs us to provide our workforce with unique opportunities to ensure their technical competence, operational expertise and leadership skills.

ASC offers several advanced education and training opportunities to individuals who demonstrate the potential to assume senior leadership positions within the Army. These include the SSC Fellowship Pro-

gram at the University of Texas-Austin, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Training With Industry and NPS. With a strong emphasis on continuous career development, coupled with quality education, career-broadening experiences and leadership training, ASC also competitively selects military and civilian applicants to participate in learning events such as the School of Choice degree program, advanced leadership training and educational/academic programs that may produce degrees at institutions of higher education. Ultimately, these opportunities will provide AL&TWF members with career-broadening opportunities through developmental assignments and operational experience. The CDG Program and RDAP will enable future leaders to develop cross-functional skills to directly support warfighters and their senior mission and operational commanders.



Two-way communication between warfighters and program managers (PMs) ensures that warfighters' requirements are being successfully met quickly and cost-effectively. PMs gain a better appreciation of the challenges warfighters face when identifying systems' requirements and articulating those requirements into logical design and production specifications.

Defense Department Initiatives

One of the most exciting activities underway within the DOD acquisition community is the Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project. Title VI, *Civil Service Reform Act*, 5 U.S.C. 4703, authorizes the Office of Personnel Management to conduct demonstration projects that experiment with new and different personnel management concepts to determine whether changes in personnel policy or procedures would result in improved federal personnel management. The project is designed to provide an encouraging environment that promotes the growth of all employees and improves the local acquisition managers' ability and authority to manage the acquisition workforce effectively. This demonstration involves streamlined hiring processes, broadbanding, simplified job classification, contribution-based compensation and appraisal systems, revised reduction-in-force procedures, expanded training opportunities and educational sabbaticals. Since its inception on March 28, 1999, more than 3,800 Army acquisition employees have converted to this ASAALT demonstration project, 9 of 12 PEOs, ASC, the Army Test and Evaluation Command and several Army Materiel Command subordinate activities, including the Army Materiel Systems Analysis Activity, Aviation and Missile Command, Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, Army Contracting Command Headquarters, Contracting Command Korea, Military Traffic Management Command's Acquisition Center, Medical Command's Health Care Acquisition Activity and National Guard Bureau Chief Information Office.

In addition, DOD is reviewing lessons learned from the department's science and technology laboratory demonstration projects and the acquisition workforce demonstration project in its development of a best-practices demonstration project. This best-practices demonstration project would be the basis for the recently proposed DOD National Security Personnel System sent to Congress for consideration in FY04. The AAC and ASC have played critical roles in developing this model personnel system.

Filling the Gaps

As previously mentioned, more than 50 percent of the acquisition workforce will be eligible to retire during the next 5 years, and with those retirements a wealth of institutional knowledge will depart. We must devise innovative methodologies to capture this institutional knowledge before it disappears. We are exploring Web-based

alternatives such as collaborative "virtual knowledge centers" to provide timely and responsive answers to concerns from the PEOs/PMs and other acquisition professionals. This will allow both new and seasoned acquisition personnel to leverage the knowledge and skills available within the AL&TWF to respond when new or repetitive challenges present themselves. The acquisition community must also effectively recruit and retain individuals with the critical skills, at the right levels and at the right time if we are to successfully support Army transformation and the warfighter. The Army's Human Resource Performance Plan must identify what gaps that we can expect when, and then ASC must develop proactive, aggressive recruiting and retention strategies to fill those gaps as we continue to attract and retain the best and brightest acquisition professionals the Army has to offer.

The AL&TWF consists of 11 civilian career fields and 5 officer specialties. We have civilian and military acquisition professionals going head-to-head for board-select program manager positions. Implementation of the Army's Acquisition Workforce Campaign Plan is critical for the success of our workforce, the Army and DOD. Equipping our warfighters is AAC's number one priority, and we cannot be effective without shaping our workforce and developing leaders to meet the challenges of an ever-changing, technology-driven future. These are exciting times as we embark on a new chapter in the Army's history. We cannot afford to fall behind the education and training power curve and we cannot fail the warfighters who count on our timely support. Through innovative technology, research, testing and development, creative education and training initiatives for our workforce and gaining a thorough understanding of our end-users' missions and motivations, we can acquire tremendous new capabilities so our warfighters can fight with greater lethality, survivability and sustainability regardless of where the battlefield or mission takes them.

LTG JOHN S. CALDWELL JR. is the Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology and Director, Acquisition Career Management. He has a B.S. degree from the U.S. Military Academy and an M.S. degree in mechanical engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology. In addition, he has attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Defense Systems Management College Program Management course.